



# News Release

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## **Tetanus vaccine shortage update: If you need it, you'll get it**

**OLYMPIA** — Health officials in Washington believe there will be enough tetanus (Td) vaccine for all priority patients despite the reduced supply. A recent announcement that the only remaining Td manufacturer will limit shipments has raised concerns about the impact of the shortage. But guidelines from the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) on prioritizing the use of this vaccine will prevent a widespread shortage in Washington.

“The CDC guidelines focus on meeting the needs of patients at highest risk,” said State Health Officer Maxine Hayes, M.D./M.P.H. “If everyone follows these guidelines, the limited supplies will be enough to take care of the people who need tetanus vaccine the most.”

CDC has defined high priority for use of Td as:

- Wound management
- People traveling to a country where the risk of diphtheria is high
- People who have received less than three doses of vaccine containing tetanus and diphtheria toxoids
- Pregnant women who have not been vaccinated with Td during the preceding 10 years.

CDC is recommending that all routine Td boosters for adolescents and adults be delayed until 2002. Providers are encouraged to record the names of patients whose boosters are delayed so they can be called back when supplies are adequate.

Earlier this year, it was announced that supplies of the Td vaccine would be limited because only one manufacturer is still producing the vaccine. It takes about 11 months to produce the vaccine, so the manufacturer expects the shortage to last 12-18 months.

The shortage has also prompted the manufacturer to announce that it will no longer provide Td vaccine to private medical providers. Until further notice, Td vaccine will only be provided to

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urgent care centers (such as emergency rooms and burn units), ob-gyn providers and local health jurisdictions. This is to help reserve the vaccine for the highest priority patients.

For more information, contact your local medical provider, local health department or the state Immunization Program. Or check our Web site, [www.doh.wa.gov/cfh/immunize](http://www.doh.wa.gov/cfh/immunize).

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